

In the Mood for Festivals At Jazz at Lincoln Center

By BEN RATLIFF

A theme of romance threads through the 2007-8 season for Jazz at Lincoln Center, Wynton Marsalis, its artistic director, said in an interview yesterday.

Another theme, though unstated, might be consolidation. The schedule for the season, from October to May, promises more of what has worked before: festival programming by coordinating the booking of Rose Hall's three performance spaces; a concert by the audience favorites Dave Brubeck and Ramsey Lewis; the return of the ever-popular Duke Ellington to the repertory rotation; more concerts of Afro-Cuban, Spanish, and Brazilian jazz hybrids; and a few landmark concerts stemming from the gospel tradition, which seem likely to generate audience interest.

But back to romance. In addition to the Valentine's Day concerts — organized into a festival in February, including an "Ellington Love Songs" program at Rose Theater and a concert by the singers Kurt Elling and Nancy King in the Allen Room — Mr. Marsalis said many of the season's concerts will have "aspects of a man and a woman" in their programming. Among these are a concert of new music commissioned from Frank Foster, the former Basie band

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saxophonist and arranger, which will follow a love-story narrative; and a singers-with-big-band show, "Best of the Big Bands," with Freddy Cole and other vocalists. Presumably the Brazilian festival in May 2008, including concerts by the bossa-nova singer Rosa Passos and the composer and performer Ivan Lins, will contain some romance as well.

Last year Mr. Marsalis noted that the John Coltrane festival particularly stood out as a success. In it Coltrane's music was approached from different perspectives in different halls. So next season, he explained, there will be more such programming. First will be the "Golden Pen" festival, celebrating jazz composition. The focus would be on Gil Evans, and the festival includes three nights of his music — "the whole span of it," Mr. Marsalis added, "not just what he did with Miles Davis" — played by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra. Mr. Marsalis's brother, the saxophonist Branford Marsalis, is to lead a band for two nights of Mr. Evans's small-group jazz in the Allen Room.

As part of the "Gospel Jazz Festival" in April 2008, Wynton Marsalis will write a work commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center for the 200th anniversary of Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, based on the church's Mass; it will involve the church's full choir, as well as the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, and will be performed at Rose Theater and at the church. During the same weekend, the pianist Eric Reed will collaborate with the gospel singer Edwin Hawkins in the Allen Room.

Also in April, Wynton Marsalis and the Spanish pianist Chano Domínguez will reprise "De Cadiz a New Orleans," a jazz-flamenco work written by Mr. Domínguez and presented in 2003. Mr. Marsalis said that it deserved a better performance and a better hearing, as well as a live recording.

The hall's Nesuhi Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame, Mr. Marsalis said, would become a greater part of the concert scheduling. This year's inductees — Clifford Brown, Benny Carter, Charlie Christian and Django Reinhardt — will be the subject of concerts next season. The concerts will go beyond standard repertory programs, he suggested, with actors playing the musicians through various stages of their careers.

There will be continued Latin jazz, but after the current season, the Afro-Latin Jazz Orchestra — the in-house Latin jazz orchestra led by Arturo O'Farrill since 2002 — will end its affiliation with Jazz at Lincoln Center to tour on its own, said a representative for Jazz at Lincoln Center.

New schedules for the organization's 22 educational programs, as well as nightly bookings at its jazz club, Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, will be released in the spring. Tickets for all the concerts presented at Rose Theater and the Allen Room go on sale today, at www.jalc.org.

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